

**NORMAL FIRE REHABILITATION PLAN SUPPLEMENT
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
AND DECISION RECORD
BOB'S FLAT FIRE (X-201)
BLM/EK/PL2001/058**

Finding of No Significant Impact:

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in Normal Fire Rehabilitation Plan Supplement Environmental Assessment BLM/EK/PL2000/058, I have determined that the proposed action will not have significant impacts on the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Decision:

It is my decision to implement the Normal Fire Rehabilitation Plan (NFRP) Supplement as described in the Environmental Assessment for the Bob's Flat Fire BLM/PL2000/058. Approximately 559 acres of private land and 21 acres of public rangeland managed by the Bureau of Land Management Elko Field Office were burned during this fire. Approximately 19 acres of the burned public land will be rehabilitated by aerially planting Wyoming big sagebrush, forage kochia, small burnet, Ladak alfalfa, Secar Snake River wheatgrass, and Western yarrow. Post-fire grazing management, including the period of time needed for closure, if any, will be determined based on monitoring and achievement of site specific resource objectives.

Rationale:

Implementation of the proposed action described in the NFRP Supplement EA for the Bob's Flat Fire will protect soils in the burned area, including preventing potential loss of soil due to wind and water erosion; will provide quality forage for wildlife; and will facilitate meeting established standards and guidelines for livestock grazing.

The Elko Resource Management Plan (RMP) is silent for the proposed action. The proposed action is consistent with the objectives of the RMP and is consistent with federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and plans to the maximum extent possible

Monitoring:

Post-treatment monitoring studies will be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed treatments and to determine the time frame for reopening lands for grazing.

Helen Hankins
Elko Field Office

Date

**NORMAL FIRE REHABILITATION PLAN SUPPLEMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
BOB'S FLAT FIRE (X-201)
BLM/EK/PL-2001/058**

Introduction:

This Supplement Environmental Assessment (EA) tiers to the Elko Field Office FY 2000 Normal Fire Rehabilitation Plan Environmental Assessment (NRFPEA) BLM/EK/PL2000/037. The Proposed Action includes NFRPEA Treatment # 2 (Planting of multiple species seed mixtures) and 8 (Invasive, nonnative weed species control. The format of this Supplement EA follows the outline in the Emergency Fire Rehabilitation Handbook, BLM Manual Handbook H-1742-1 dated July 27, 1999.

List of Preparers:

Tom Warren	Emergency Stabilization Rehabilitation Manager
Donna Nyrehn	Rangeland Management Specialist
Marlene Braun	Environmental Coordinator
Ken Wilkinson	Wildlife Biologist
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Project Area Description:

A. Fire Description:

The fire was started by a lightning strike and was reported on July 5, 2001 and was declared out on July 8, 2001. It burned 21 acres of public land and 559 acres of private land. A portion of the fenced federal range within Boulder Valley (considered part of the T Lazy S Allotment) was affected. This fire affected only a very small percentage of the fenced federal range. No structures burned in this fire, and no fence burned. Burn severity was moderate.

B. Vegetation and Soil Description:

The burned area ranges in elevation from 5,020 feet to 5,280 feet. Soils are composed of gravelly loam, gravelly silt loam, cobbly loam, and fine sandy loam. Predominant range sites are Shallow Loam 8-12" and Loamy 8-10". Vegetation in the burned area is composed

predominately of Wyoming big sagebrush, Douglas rabbitbrush, Sandberg's bluegrass, bottlebrush squirreltail, Idaho fescue, bluebunch wheatgrass, and perennial forbs.

Proposed Project Treatments:

A. Revegetation:

1. Wildlife Seeding:

Approximately 21 acres would be aerially seeded with Wyoming big sagebrush, forage kochia, small burnet, western yarrow, upland alfalfa and Snake River wheatgrass. This area provides critical mule deer and pronghorn antelope winter range. Successful seeding efforts would help improve the forage and cover value for wintering deer in the area.

2. Invasive, Nonnative Weed Control:

If noxious weeds are detected during and after fire rehabilitation efforts, appropriate Integrated Pest Management (IPM) control measures would be implemented to control the invasion.

B. Structures: None

C. Erosion Control Treatments: None

D. Site Preparation: None

E. Other: None

Consideration of Critical Elements and Resources:

The following critical elements of the human environment are not present or are not affected by the proposed action or alternative:

ACECs
Cultural Resources
Environmental Justice
Farmlands, prime or unique
Floodplains
Wastes, hazardous/solid
Water Quality, surface/ground
Wetlands/Riparian Zones
Wild and Scenic Rivers
Wilderness

Critical elements and resources brought forward for analysis:

A. Air Quality:

The burned area is susceptible to wind erosion until revegetation occurs. Wind erosion can increase Particulate Matter #10 (PM#10) emissions causing exceedence of PM #10 air quality standards which can negatively affect human health. In addition, airborne dust can cause visibility and safety problems on roads in the area. The fire burned within ½ mile of I-80. Past fires that occurred near I-80 have created safety problems along the highway from blowing dust and ash. The proposed seeding would encourage regrowth of vegetation, thus reducing future potential air quality and safety impacts.

B. Visual Resources:

The burned area is within Visual Resource Management Class IV. Revegetation effort of aerially seeding of a native shrub and forb is designed to blend into the background without attracting undue attention and aid in restoring the area to a more characteristic landscape.

C. Wildlife:

Approximately 21 acres of critical mule deer and pronghorn winter range were impacted by the fire. Overall, there are approximately 100 bird species, 70 mammal species and several reptile and amphibian species that can be found in sagebrush habitats on the allotment. The area provides habitat for many of these species. Wildlife was adversely impacted by the Bob's Flat Fire primarily through temporary loss of habitat through removal of vegetation by the fire. The proposed rehabilitation treatment of seeding critical mule deer winter range would benefit wildlife by helping to restore critical forage and cover more quickly.

D. Migratory Birds:

The proposed restorative actions are located in a sagebrush habitat type. The Nevada Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plan identifies the following bird species associated with this physiographic region: sage grouse (obligate), black rosy finch, ferruginous hawk, gray flycatcher, loggerhead shrike, vesper sparrow, prairie falcon, sage sparrow, sage thrasher, Swainson's hawk, burrowing owl, calliope hummingbird, Brewer's sparrow, Western meadowlark, black-throated sparrow, lark sparrow, green-tailed towhee, Brewer's blackbird, horned lark, and lark sparrow.

Maintaining complete, diverse sagebrush communities is integral to conservation efforts for these species. Low elevation sagebrush sites, such as the project area, are vulnerable to conversion to cheatgrass types following wildfire. The Wyoming big sagebrush vegetation type generally does not naturally respond well to block burn configurations, such as the burn on the area, where only relatively small intact stands still exist. Wyoming big sagebrush seed banks (viable residual seed on the ground) usually do not persist after the summer following seed dispersal in unburned

areas, let alone burned areas. Recruitment would be slow from intact stands and surrounding unburned stands without rehabilitation. The proposed action to seed the area would help to provide wildlife cover and forage. In addition, seeding forage kochia and the forb species would also help slow the establishment of cheatgrass within the burn area and help to slow down or stop future fires. This should provide beneficial impacts to these species and is consistent with the conservation measures listed in Section 3 (e) of the President's Migratory Bird Executive Order.

E. Threatened, Endangered, Candidate, or Sensitive Species:

The area provides habitat for golden eagle, burrowing owls, Swainson's hawks and ferruginous hawks, which are State of Nevada Listed Species. Nevada BLM policy is to provide State of Nevada Listed Species with the same level of protection as is provided for candidate species to prevent further listings as threatened or endangered. The proposed action would not likely affect any other BLM Special Status Species of plants or animals. The proposed seeding treatment and rest from grazing pressure are designed to help restore sagebrush habitat and/or reduce the impacts from the invasion or re-invasion of fire prone annual weeds. The artificial seeding of Wyoming big sagebrush and later successful establishment of this species from this effort would ensure that it is on site as a future seed source, and allow cover and forage, in the event that natural recovery is slow (See Migratory Bird Section above). Prey species for the State of Nevada Listed Species would be able to more fully utilize the burn area with big sagebrush cover. Otherwise, many areas on the burn would likely be avoided until a semblance of shrubs naturally reestablish.

F. Native American Religious Concerns:

Native Americans would be consulted as appropriate prior to any ground disturbing activities or chemical weed treatment. If traditional cultural properties or other areas having traditional or religious significance to Native Americans are discovered as a result of this consultation, then BLM would insure that measures are taken to avoid or reduce impacts to these areas of concern to Native Americans.

G. Invasive, Nonnative Species:

Fire suppression efforts, including use of engines and other mechanized vehicles, could have introduced noxious weed species seeds into the burned area. In order to reduce the potential impacts of an invasion of noxious weeds, monitoring should be conducted after rehabilitation treatments are completed. If noxious weeds are discovered to have invaded the burn area, herbicide treatments would be needed to reduce the spread of the noxious weeds. The proposed monitoring would help to prevent or reduce any such noxious weed invasion of the Bob's Flat burn area.

Project Cost Summary: (the cost summary information can be found in the Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) Plan and Accomplishment Report for the Elko 14 Fire

Complex)

Project Maps: (project maps can be found in the Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) Plan and Accomplishment Report for the Elko 14 Fire Complex)

Cost/Risk Assessment: (the cost/risk assessment can be found in the Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) Plan and Accomplishment Report for the Elko 14 Fire Complex)

Native/Nonnative Worksheet: (the native/nonnative worksheet can be found in the Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) Plan and Accomplishment Report for the Elko 14 Fire Complex)